THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN WEEKS HE'S FOUND ANYTHING THAT EVEN *MIGHT* BE SKULL-RELATED. HE PICKED UP SOME A.I.M. TRANSMISSIONS FROM THIS LOCATION.
AND THE SKULL HAS OFTEN USED A.I.M. TO ENGINEER HIS TERROR.
SO INSTEAD OF RESTING, OR PLANNING THE RESISTANCE'S NEXT MOVE...I PULL ANOTHER ALL-NIGHTER.
BECAUSE IT'S MY WEIGHT TO CARRY.
BUT IT TURNS OUT NICK WASN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO OVERHEARD THAT TRANSMISSION...

HEY--
KRAK
KWANNG
WON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME BEFORE THEY REALIZE THEIR REAR GUARD IS MISSING...
BUT IT SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO FIND OUT WHY HYDRA IS HERE.

HAIL IMMORTAL HYDRA!
DEATH TO INTERLOPERS!
THE HORDES OF HYDRA.
NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I FACE THEM...
...NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I HEAR THEIR CULTISH SLOGANS...
CUT OFF A LIMB AND TWO MORE WILL TAKE ITS PLACE!

DAMN FOOLS...
...NOTHING HERE WAS WORTH *DYING* FOR...

I'M DAZED FROM THE BLAST...BUT I KNOW ENOUGH TO GET MOVING.
THAT EXPLOSION IS GOING TO BRING A CROWD...AND S.H.I.E.L.D. WON'T BE FAR--

--BEHIND THEM...?
ATTENTION, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
YOU ARE ORDERED TO SURRENDER UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDENT!
HOW THE HELL DID YOU GET HERE SO FAST?
DROP THE SHIELD AND PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR!
YOU'RE ALREADY INJURED! DON'T FORCE US TO OPEN FIRE!
I'VE HAD THIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU PEOPLE A FEW TIMES ALREADY...
HASN'T DIRECTOR HILL MADE YOU WATCH THE TAPES?
HALT! DROP THE SHIELD!
DON'T MAKE ME--

ARE THOSE MEN HURT?
FURY GOT HIS HANDS ON SOME CAPE-KILLER ARMOR AND FOUND A WAY TO DISABLE THEM.
ELECTROMAGNETIC OVERLOAD. PULSE-BROADCAST RIGHT INTO THEIR COMM SYSTEMS.
JUST KNOCKED OUT... IT'S A BIT WORSE THAN GETTING TASERED, BUT NOTHING SERIOUS.
AND IT SHUTS DOWN THE SUITS...FRIES THEIR ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS.
STARK'LL PROBABLY FIGURE IT OUT, SO IT WON'T WORK AGAIN.
THEN WHAT WAS THE POINT?
YOU'RE NOT ON YOUR WAY TO SOME SECRET PRISON... SEEMS LIKE A PRETTY GOOD POINT TO ME.
FAIR ENOUGH.
BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING, FLYING IN TO MY RESCUE?
I DID MENTION NICK FURY, RIGHT?

HE FOUND OUT THE A.I.M. CELL YOU WERE AFTER HAD CLEARED OUT AND THAT HYDRA WAS MOVING IN FOR A SWEEP.
BUT SINCE YOU TWO ARE ONLY TALKING THROUGH DEAD-DROPS, HE HAD NO WAY TO GET IN TOUCH...
AND HE DIDN'T WANT ME STEPPING INTO A HORNET'S NEST ON MY OWN?
BASICALLY, YEAH.
BUT WHY SEND YOU? I THOUGHT YOU WERE STILL CONFLICTED?
I STOPPED BEING CONFLICTED WHEN THEY BLEW A HOLE THROUGH GOLIATH'S CHEST.
THOSE CAPE-KILLERS WERE THERE AWFULLY FAST AFTER THAT BLAST.
I KNOW.
TONY AND REED HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH SOME PRETTY ROTTEN APPLES...BULLSEYE, THE GREEN GOBLIN...
...BUT YOU DON'T THINK THEY'D USE HYDRA, TOO, DO YOU?

...AS LONG AS I HAVE MY WORK, I NEED NOTHING ELSE.
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR...
BECAUSE OUR PLAN WOULDN'T GET VERY FAR WITHOUT ARNIM ZOLA'S UNIQUE BRAND OF GENIUS...
AND WHAT IS THE PLAN THIS TIME?
A NEW VARIATION ON A FAMILIAR THEME.
WE'RE GOING TO DESTROY CAPTAIN AMERICA...AND EVERYTHING HE HOLDS DEAR...
Next Month: Our Biggest Cap Story Yet--
The DEATH Of The DREAM!

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

All right--we're finally back with a letters page. It's just been hectic and crazy since Civil War started, honestly, and time has been a rare commodity. But we're here, and we'll try to be back each issue from here on in, but no promises...Anyway, let's just jump right in.

It is so cool to see Bucky back in action again. It would be so easy to handle Buck poorly, and I'm glad to see that that hasn't happened.

#21 was about as awesome a conclusion to the Twenty-First Century Blitz arc as I could have hoped for, and I was especially happy to see Cap give Bucky his space. In the past, Cap has been too quick to boss everyone around and act all superior, so seeing him behave so maturely and responsibly in light of Bucky's unique situation is great.

That said, there are a few things I'm not too keen on. Since Cap used the Cosmic Cube to help Bucky regain his true identity, things have been a little...stale. We got fourteen issues of fast-moving, action-packed excitement, and then everything slowed to a crawl. That wouldn't be a problem, normally, but the storylines since that issue have all seemed more suited to that same style and we just haven't been getting it.

I can't wait to see the CAPTAIN AMERICA tie-ins to CIVIL WAR, but to be honest I'm more interested in seeing how Agent 13--and perhaps Bucky--respond to the Registration Act than anything else!

Adrian J. Watts
Melbourne, Australia

Honestly, I think our series has become more quickly-paced since the end of the Winter Soldier arc. I mean, we just ended a story that had as much action as the entire first year of the book in four issues, probably. But glad to see you're sticking around, anyway.

Just put down CAP # 22 and all I can say is, great job! Honestly, how many writers can put out an issue with little to no action scenes and still produce a fantastic issue? You have made me a red, white, and blue Captain America-lovin' fanboy! In 22 issues you have turned around a stagnant character and placed him back into the upper echelon of Marveldom. Not only that but, Mr. Brubaker, you do indeed have the magic touch. Never was a big fan of Cap or Daredevil until you took them on. Now I am hooked on them and I am digging your work on UNCANNY X-MEN. Looking forward to CRIMINAL! Keep up the excellent work on CAP and your other titles. As always, Make Mine Marvel!

Rob in GA

Wait, weren't there any action scenes in that issue? Perkins!!!

And thanks for checking out CRIMINAL, Rob, I urge all Cap fans to do the same, obviously.

Since CIVIL WAR started, I have asked many people which side they are on. Without exception, they have identied themselves as either pro- or anti-registration, as though the Superhuman Registration Act is the main issue in the storyline. Similarly, many of the creators involved have given way too much credit to the Act.

I think the *real* issue here is what it means to be a hero. You've got people like Sharon Carter who support the Act simply because it is the law. You've got folks like Iron Man who support it because they truly believe that the Act is right and moral and just as necessary to ensuring human safety as defeating Kang the Conqueror--or if, like me, you're the cynical sort, you might argue that Tony and Reed support the Act because it gives them power over the rest of the superhuman community.

But then you've got Cap. The Superhuman Registration Act does not adversely affect Cap--his identity is known to S.H.I.E.L.D., he has received (and delivered) S.H.I.E.L.D. training and often works for them already.

He does not oppose the Act because it could threaten those he loves or result in him supporting causes he does not believe in. He fights against it for a purely moral and selfless reason: because he believes it is *wrong*.

Whether it is wrong or not really doesn't matter --all that matters is that Cap *believes* it is and is willing to fight to the death to protect people from it. That's what makes Cap a hero. The Superhuman Registration Act may be the most wonderful thing ever to happen to the United States; but if you even have an inkling of doubt and don't stand against it, then you're wrong.

For a very long time, I strongly disliked CAPTAIN AMERICA--both the character and the title. I thought that Cap supported American ideals only because that's what he was *supposed* to support. When Brubaker & Co. took on the title, I began to like the *series* but still wasn't too fond of the *character*. But when CIVIL WAR kicked off and Cap turned against his government, his friends and even his lover to fight for what he believed in, my respect for and appreciation of the character skyrocketed.

I support the Registration Act, but when people ask me which side I am on, I tell them I'm on Cap's side--because by fighting for what he believes in, no matter the cost, Cap is the one true hero in all this; and no matter what, I'll *always* side with the heroes.

I didn't like the first sixty years' worth of Cap stories, but I like 'em now and don't want to stop anytime soon! The last few issues had me worried that the series was becoming a little stale, but #22 soundly quashed any fears I had. Keep up the amazing work!

Adrian J. Watts
Melbourne, Australia

Hey, wait a minute...you're back already.

Good points, on the various views of the Registration Act. Captain America, for as long as I've been a fan of the character, was always about what was right, not about what was the law. As we well know, there have been plenty of things on the law books that were wrong, and that people knew in their gut were wrong, long before anyone said or did anything. Thinking about it recently, it occurred to me that Cap's mother only got the right to vote the year before he was born, officially, so this is something that I would think she instilled in him, a sense of justice and what's right, and one of the reasons he's always favored equality, probably.

Glad to see that you've come around to Cap, in any case, but I still think you're crazy to call a giant robot battle "stale." Heh heh.

Given Dr. Doom's history with Nazi Germany, it's strange to see him deal-making with the Red Skull. In an issue of "The Invaders" with a guest appearance by Thor, Victor Von Doom, his face in bandages, visited some Nazi plotters. He kept a low profile until the last few panels, where he expressed his hatred of Nazis since they rounded up and exterminated gypsies; Doom's parents were gypsies.

Wilfred D. DeVoe
Salem, MA

Sure, all of that is true but Doom will make a deal with anyone if it strokes his ego enough and if the thing he's being offered--in this case, a glimpse of his possible "future-past"--is truly unique. All of which are things the Skull knew full well before he contacted him. And it's not like they're forming a long-term partnership, they're just making a deal.

Interesting character study this ish; much different from the all-out action I've seen in this book, and finally Cap catches up with the rest of the Marvel U with Civil War. Okay, so Dr. Faustus is undercover for the Red Skull. But what about Maria Hill, hmm? Something tells me there's a great chance she's more than you're telling us (to say the least); 'cause it sure is coincidental how she appeared right before Civil War and stuff. I don't think I ever really liked Sharon Carter before this issue--maybe now she's more vulnerable though; she's still no Bernie or Rachel though, ya ask me.

Andrew J. Shaw

I don't know, Andrew, for me, Sharon is better than Bernie or Rachel combined even, and she's always been one of my favorite characters.

Anyway, that's all we've got room for this issue. Be sure to join us next issue for our HUGE follow-up to the Marvel CIVIL WAR--that you can only find in these pages! "The Death of the Dream" begins in CAP #25!

But before that, please check out the WINTER SOLDIER SPECIAL next month--written by me, and drawn by Lee Weeks, with inks by DAREDEVIL's own Stefano Gaudiano. It's one of my favorite things I've written for Marvel, so give it a look, I think you'll dig it.

Ed Brubaker

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